

WISDOM OF THE BUDDHA: IF YOU EAT MEAT YOU ARE EATING YOURSELF.

"Suppose a person eats a sheep. The sheep dies and becomes a person; the person dies and becomes a sheep, The same applies in all rebirths among the ten categories. Through death after death and birth after birth, they eat each other. The evil karma one is born with continues to the bounds of the future. The basis for all that is stealing and greed."

- Chapter 4, Shurangama Sutra

Commentary:

Under the laws of karma, killing (regardless of whether the victim is a human or animal) is a violation of the 5 precepts. Therefore, activities such as hunting, eating meat and meat packing all generate karmic debts. Thus, if you act on a greedy desire to eat lamb, you will be reborn as a sheep to be slaughtered and eaten, and so forth.

Furthermore, the true extent of such negative karma is often even worse. For instance, according to an abridged excerpt of Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's Commentary on the Shurangama Sutra:

"During the reign of the Emperor Wu of Liang, the Buddhadharma flourished. At that time there was a wealthy man who was celebrating the marriage of his son. He invited Ch'an Master Chih Kung to recite Sutras and give the blessing. When Ch'an Master Chih Kung arrived and looked around, he said:

How strange! How bizarre!.....

The daughter eats the mother's flesh.

The drum the son beats is stretched with the father's skin.

Pigs and sheep are on the seat.

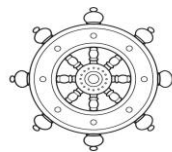
The six close kin cook in the brazier.

People gather to celebrate.

I see all this as a form of suffering.

How did Ch'an Master Chih Kung know this? Because he had the ability to know others' thoughts and the ability to perceive past lives - he had the Buddha Eye. When he looked in front of the house he said, "The daughter eats the mother's flesh," because he saw a little girl chewing on a chunk of pork. Her mother had died and been reborn as a pig. The pig had been slaughtered and cooked, and she was actually eating the flesh of her own mother! When he inspected





the musicians in the band by the entrance way, he said, "The drum the son beats is stretched with the father's skin." The drummer was hitting a drum stretched with deer-hide. His father had died and been reborn as a deer. The deer had been slaughtered and its hide tanned and the drummer was actually beating his own father! Then Ch'an Master Chih Kung noticed that "Pigs and sheep are on the seat." He saw pigs and sheep sitting like guests on the k'ang - the high brick beds in the house. They were people now, but in their former lives they had been pigs and sheep. In their former lives they themselves had been eaten, so now they were reborn as people who in turn ate pigs and sheep to even up the debt. When the Ch'an Master took a look at the cooking pots' he exclaimed, "Six close kin cook in the brazier." The six kinds of close kin refer to relatives on the father's side and the mother's side, kin of the brother and sisters, and so forth. They had been close relatives of these people but now had been reborn as pigs and sheep, had been slaughtered, and were being cooked in the brazier. Ch'an Master Chih Kung summarized, "People gather celebrate." Everyone who came was saying, "Congratulations!" and "Best Wishes!" But the Master notes, "I see all this as a form of suffering." What I see is actually suffering."

Ways to Reform

It should be clear to everyone by now that hunting, eating meat or the like are all harmful and repulsive behavior. Fortunately, the Buddha offers us ways to change. In the Treatise on Response and Retribution (a book much promoted by Master Yin Guang), it states that ***"If one who has long committed evil deeds decides to change, abstaining henceforth from all evil while doing all good, great fortune will manifest after a while."***

Thus, we should now diligently strive to become vegan or vegetarian. If we are hunters, fishermen or involved in the meat packing and leather industry, we should change professions. Furthermore, we should purchase captive animals slated for slaughter and set them free. Lastly, we should recite **Namo Amitufo**. The Sutras state that this Buddha name mantra can eradicate eight billion eons of heavy karmic offenses per recitation, it can also guarantee for us either Bodhi in Pureland or a blissful rebirth in the human or heavenly realms.

Recommended Non-Profit Animal Shelter: <http://www.avalokitesvara.tw/>

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